

Communications Plan

Illegal Trucker Blockades

ISSUE

The ongoing illegal trucker blockades in Ottawa, at the Ambassador Bridge and the Coutts border and elsewhere across the country are eroding public trust in policing services and their ability to enforce the law, and in governments and their ability to resolve the situation. A proactive communications approach that

OBJECTIVES

- Demonstrate leadership in the removal of illegal trucker blockades in Ottawa, at border crossings and across the country
- Present a unified approach across jurisdictions in the removal of illegal blockades
- Communicate in concrete terms the ongoing progress in the removal of illegal blockades with a focus on enforcement and inter-jurisdictional coordination

TARGET AUDIENCES

- General public
- Parliamentarians
- International Partners

APPROACH

A proactive multi-pronged approach is recommended that targets multiple audiences. Some individuals involved in illegal activity as part of the demonstrations do not believe they are doing anything illegal and hence there will be no negative consequences for such actions. The opposite is true. The consequences could be severe.

Immediately adopting this strategy and communicating clearly and directly to protestors (and to Canadians) about the illegal activities at play – and their impact – could incent compliance and result in the departure of some trucks once their owners realize the potential economic costs and risks.

Critical to the success of this communications plan is enforcement – demonstrating action will heighten public confidence considerably.

General Public:

Prime Minister's Public Communications - Sustained communications will be needed to continue to demonstrate leadership on this issue. This will include a readout from IRG on Sunday, 13 Feb and a media availability planned for Monday, 14 Feb alongside the Deputy Prime Minister where announcements can be made related to decisions taken at the IRG.

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Daily Ministers Media Availabilities – Daily opportunity for key Ministers to emphasize the federal actions taken to support police operations in Ottawa, at the Ambassador Bridge, and Coutts border crossing, and reiterate the need for the illegal blockades to end. This availability would be supported by the latest available operational information, as well as the comprehensive whole-of-government media lines. Additional announcements following key decisions will be made by these Ministers and possibly the Deputy Prime Minister.

Border Measures Announcement on Tuesday Feb. 15 where Ministers can show how the following public health measures has slowed the spread of COVID and allowed for the loosening of restrictions. Minister will be equipped with consistent messages on illegal border blockades.

Integrated Police Media Briefings (TBD) to be explored where local, provincial and federal police representatives would brief the media together in communicating progress on enforcement with concrete data (e.g. number of tickets, arrests, trucks removed, etc.).

Parliamentarians:

Opposition Leaders Engagement by Prime Minister – following the call last Thursday, PM could plan calls to keep opposition parties current on government efforts and operations to reduce misinformed criticism and media coverage.

Parliamentary Unity –statements in the House could be considered by all party leaders to signal their support to end the illegal occupations across the country that is affecting our economy, our reputation and our Canadian collective trust in our institutions and our law enforcement agencies.

Provinces and Territories:

First Ministers Meeting could be considered this week to inform provincial and territorial partners on federal government efforts and operations, and to seek a unified approach and common messaging for the removal of illegal blockades. A meeting read-out will be issued following the meeting to reassure Canadians that there is FPT unity.

International Partners:

Opportunities to be sought where Ministers and/or federal government representatives can brief on the actions being taken and seek out messages of public endorsement from international partners.

KEY MESSAGES

A comprehensive whole-of-government media lines are updated and provided to Ministers every day to ensure messaging is consistent and coordinated across government. These messages can be drawn on by Ministers to support regular media availabilities.

See separate Evergreen Media Lines.

COORDINATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Interdepartmental Communications Team will continue to meet regularly to coordination communications planning and implementation. Traditional media coverage and social media discourse will continue to be monitored in real time on all departmental channels, and the plan adjusted as required.

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